



Dear Neighbor,

This year, thanks to the leadership of Governor M. Jodi Rell and the many legislators who worked hard on the issue, the General Assembly passed a historic transportation package that will fund vital improvements in rail service and relieve traffic congestion in Fairfield County. There is a growing recognition that the entire state economy will suffer if we do not make it easier for businesses and employees to commute and transport goods. This recognition helped the legislature come to the consensus that an investment today will pay off in the future, both in Fairfield County and throughout all of Connecticut.

Please take a moment to read more about these projects and how they will affect our towns. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at 1-800-842-1421. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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Probably not a single legislator who entered this session expected we could come to an agreement where all of the Transportation Strategy Board's recommendations would be approved and funded, let alone doing so without resorting to tolls or tax increases. It was an extraordinary achievement, and one that demonstrated the good things that can happen when the General Assembly puts aside partisan differences to work together for the good of the state.

Building on last year's initiative by Governor Rell to replace all 342 Metro North rail cars, together with a new year-round rail car repair facility, this year the General Assembly took the next step and authorized a \$2.3 billion plan to provide better mobility for Connecticut's future.

2005–2006 Fairfield County Finally Gets Transportation Relief

For years, residents of Fairfield County have lived with the daily reality of traffic congestion and gridlock on our roads, impeding commuters and restricting businesses' ability to transport goods. This year we received some terrific news from the state legislature with the passage of a historic \$2.3 billion transportation improvement package that, over the next ten years, will dramatically increase our mass transit capacity and complete major road improvements throughout the entire state. Most importantly, this plan implements all of the recommendations of the Transportation Strategy Board (TSB) without having to create toll roads or rely on tax increases.

This marks the second major financial commitment in the past two years on the part of Governor Rell and the legislature to reverse the decades of inaction and languish that led to our current situation of chronic gridlock and congestion. Combined with the \$1.3 billion approved in the 2005 legislative session, this completes a sweeping bi-partisan effort that started in earnest in 2001 with the creation of the TSB. Thanks to the work of the TSB, we have moved past the days of incremental funding and stopgap measures, and are now engaged in a well thought out plan of strategic improvements that will ensure, in ten years time, that the state of Connecticut is able to meet its transportation needs for business and commuters.

Over the past two years, initiatives have been approved that are of great importance to the citizens of Fairfield County, including:

- **Metro North Rail Cars:** Service on the Metro North, the state's most important commuter rail, has been steadily deteriorating due to the aging of rail cars, most of which are over 30 years old. These cars will now all be replaced and a new maintenance facility will be built to service them.
- **\$60 million for parking and rail station upgrades on the Shore Line East and Metro North Rails:** As anyone who has taken the train to New York knows, the rail stations on the Metro North are in dire need of improvement and upgrades. With more comfortable rail stations and improved parking, we can expect to see many more people taking the train instead of driving, a key step towards easing congestion on Connecticut's highways.
- **Route 95 Improvements:** We are investing tens of millions of dollars into environmental assessments and design plans for operational improvements to I-95, an effort which should prevent the highway from continuing to be a "parking lot" during rush hour.
- **Increasing service on Shore Line East:** A vitally important step for commuters. More service will mean that more people can ride the train and, at the same time, will ensure the trains are less crowded. This is a win-win improvement.
- **\$45 million for more trains on the Norwalk-Danbury line:** More rail cars on the Norwalk-Danbury line will help keep automobiles off Route 7 and I-95, relieving some of the congestion.



The TSB plan also includes a variety of statewide measures designed to keep heavy freight trucks off the roads, including:

- Encouraging greater use of our commercial ports.
- More rail freight service.
- Studying rail links to other ports.